

## Venomous Spiders

The female black widow spider has a round, glossy, black body about one-half inch long, with an orange-red hourglass shaped marking on the underside. It is commonly found throughout our state. Bites by this spider typically are painful and result in initial redness and swelling in the region of the bite. Symptoms may progress to muscle cramps and muscle rigidity, headache, nausea, vomiting, weakness, twitching, and difficulty breathing. The peak effect usually occurs in four to six hours. Medical treatment is definitely indicated, since fatalities, although rare, have occurred.

The brown recluse spider can be identified by its long spindly legs and small, light-colored, oval shaped body, marked on top with a darker violin shape. Symptoms from the bite of this spider are usually limited to a local tissue reaction. At first there may be very little evidence of a bite and very little pain. Usually, within eight to 16 hours, a fluid-filled vesicle will develop in the middle of the bite. This blister is often encircled by a red swollen area, and this in turn is surrounded by a blanched pale ring. This "target lesion" is typical of brown recluse bites. Over the next one to two days, the blister will rupture, leaving an open ulcer. Unless medical treatment is obtained, this lesion may become infected and spread. In serious cases, there may be significant tissue loss and more severe complications, including breakdown of red blood cells with resultant kidney damage.

If a black widow or brown recluse bite is suspected, contact the Mississippi Regional Poison Control Center immediately.

The University of Mississippi Medical Center offers equal opportunity in education and employment and in all its programs and services, M/F/D/V.

## First Aid for Spider Bites

Calm and reassure victim.

Remove rings, bracelets, watches, gloves or shoes that may restrict circulation as the area begins to swell.

If the bite is on an extremity, immobilize the affected area.

Gently cleanse the bite.

Place a topical antibiotic ointment on the area and cover with a Band-Aid.

Caution the patient to avoid rubbing, massaging, or scratching the bite area.

Place a cool compress over the area to help reduce swelling. Be careful not to leave this on the bite.

Call the Mississippi Regional Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222

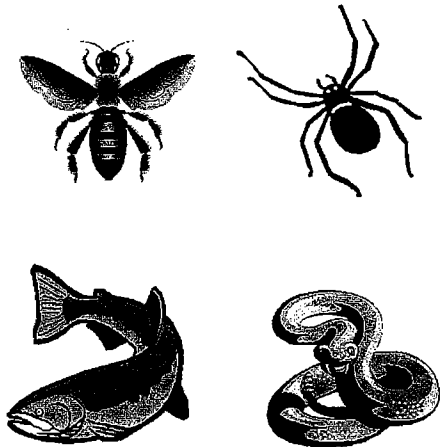
## Catfish Envenomation

Punctures by the spine of a catfish fin deposit a venom which results in an immediate onset of symptoms. Symptoms may include intense throbbing or scalding pain spreading upward from the wound, and lasting 30-60 minutes. The area quickly swells and muscle spasms usually follow. Victims may experience episodes of fainting, decreased heart rate and slowed breathing. The wound may become infected. Immediately begin cleaning the wound, removing any excess tissue. Immerse wound immediately in hot (not scalding) water for 30 to 90 minutes. Make sure tetanus is current (within past 5 years). Apply antibiotic ointments/creams and monitor closely for infection. Keep wound elevated. The patient is to stay off the extremity until the swelling goes down.

## Venomous Animals of Mississippi

**FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE  
WITH BITES OR STINGS  
CALL 1-800-222-1222**

# Venomous Animals of Mississippi



**Mississippi Regional  
Poison Control Center**

**1-800-222-1222**

## VENOMOUS ANIMALS OF MISSISSIPPI

There are nine species of venomous snakes in Mississippi. They are as follows:

- Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake
- Canebrake Rattlesnake
- Carolina Pigmy Rattlesnake
- Dusky Pigmy Rattlesnake
- Western Pigmy Rattlesnake
- Eastern Cottonmouth Moccasin
- Western Cottonmouth Moccasin
- Southern Copperhead
- Eastern Coral Snake

In addition, the following two species of venomous spiders are known to exist in our state:

- Black Widow Spider
- Brown Recluse Spider

Other species in this area which are known to be of potential danger include:

- Bees, Wasps, and Hornets
- Fire Ants
- Stinging Caterpillars
- Catfish
- Portuguese Man-of-War

Bites and stings by these groups usually cause local pain, swelling and redness. However, the victim of any insect sting can develop an allergic reaction which may be manifested by a rash, nausea, vomiting, headache, shortness of breath, and possibly unconsciousness and shock. This type of reaction is a life-threatening emergency and medical assistance must be sought immediately.

### FACTS ABOUT SNAKES AND SNAKEBITES

Of approximately 7,000 snakebites each year in the United States, there are fewer than 15 deaths. Most snakes are normally not aggressive and, given the chance, will avoid contact with man. All venomous snakes in Mississippi have the ability to bite but do not always release venom. About 35-40 percent of the bites reported each year result in little or no envenomation.

Most cases of snakebite that result in envenomation are related to the victim's attempting to kill or catch the snake.

Signs and symptoms of envenomation may include any or all of the following:

- Fang Marks
- Intense Local Pain
- Rapid Swelling
- Discoloration
- Oozing of Blood from the Fang Marks

If fang marks are present but there is little or no pain, swelling, or discoloration and the bite is dry, envenomation is probably minimal.

Many snakebite victims are discharged from the hospital within 24 hours and recover with no long-term effects. Despite this fact, you should always seek medical evaluation of a snakebite injury.

### First Aid for Snakebites

If victim is not arousable or is not breathing call for an ambulance. For assistance call MRPCC at 1-800-222-1222.

1. Calm and reassure the victim.
2. If the snake is still in the area do not attempt to kill or catch it unless it poses an immediate danger to you or the victim. Try to remember what the snake looks like so that you can identify it from pictures in the emergency department.
3. Remove all items that may restrict circulation in the affected extremity. Watches, bracelets, rings, gloves or shoes may pose a problem as the area swells.
4. Immobilize the affected area as much as possible. Attempt to keep the bite at or slightly below the level of the heart.
5. Wash area thoroughly but do not rub or scrub as this may promote absorption of the venom.
6. Attempt to keep the victim from moving rapidly about while evacuating to transportation.
7. Take victim to the nearest medical facility as quickly as possible.

Do not give the victim anything to eat or drink, particularly alcohol.

Do not place the affected area in ice.

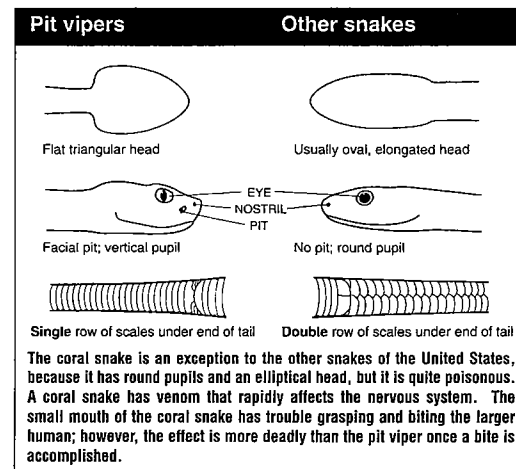
Do not make any cuts or apply suction to the area.

Do not attempt to give antivenin.

Do not administer pain or anti-anxiety medications.

Do not apply a tourniquet.

*Illustration courtesy of Mississippi State Cooperative Extension Service informational sheet 641*



## Poison Prevention Tips

### Store Poisons Safely

- Store medicines and household products locked up, where children cannot see or reach them.
- Store poisons in their original containers.
- Use child-resistant packaging. But remember — nothing is child-proof!

### Use Poisons Safely

- Read the label. Follow the directions on medicines and products.
- Are children around? Take the product or medicine with you to answer the door or the phone.
- Lock products and medicines up after using them.
- Is it medicine? Call it medicine, not candy.
- Children learn by imitation. Take your medicines where children can't watch.

### Teach Children to Ask First

- Poisons can look like food or drink. Teach children to ask an adult before eating or drinking anything.



If you think someone has  
been poisoned, call your  
poison center right away —  
**1-800-222-1222.**

## First Aid for Poisoning

### Has the person collapsed or stopped breathing?

- ▶ Call **911** or your local emergency number right away.

### Poison in the eyes?

- ▶ Rinse eyes with running water for 15 to 20 minutes.
- ▶ Call **1-800-222-1222.**

### Poison on the skin?

- ▶ Take off any clothing that the poison touched.
- ▶ Rinse skin with running water for 15 to 20 minutes.
- ▶ Call **1-800-222-1222.**

### Inhaled poison?

- ▶ Get to fresh air right away.
- ▶ Call **1-800-222-1222.**

### Swallowed the wrong medicine or too much medicine?

- ▶ Call **1-800-222-1222.**

### Swallowed something that's not food or medicine?

- ▶ Drink a small amount of milk or water.
- ▶ Call **1-800-222-1222.**



**Call FAST to treat a poisoning!**

**Call FIRST to prevent a poisoning!**

2500 N. State St.  
Jackson, MS 39216

**POISON**  
**Help**  
**1-800-222-1222**

**POISON**  
**Help**  
**1-800-222-1222**

**How Your Poison Center Helps You**

In the United States, poison centers provide immediate treatment advice for poison emergencies. They also provide information about poisons and poison prevention, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Poisons can hurt you — or even kill you — if you eat them, breathe them, or get them in your eyes or on your skin. The poison center can help you with questions about:

- household products
- chemicals at work or in the environment
- drugs (prescription, over-the-counter, herbal, illegal, or animal medicines)
- snake bites, spider bites, and scorpion stings.

For life-saving treatment advice about any kind of poison, call **1-800-222-1222**. A specially trained nurse, pharmacist or doctor at your poison center will help. All services are free and confidential.

Poison center services are available for people with hearing problems and for non-English speakers.

When health care providers need information about treating poisonings, they also call their local poison center.

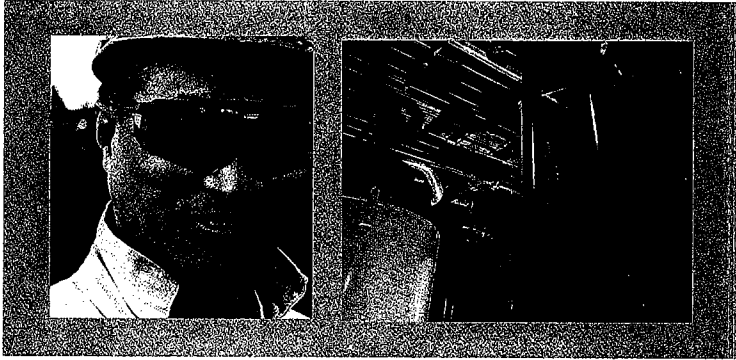
**We Help People of All Ages — in All Types of Situations**



WHEN CHILDREN GET INTO HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS, POISON CENTER EXPERTS ARE JUST ONE CALL AWAY.



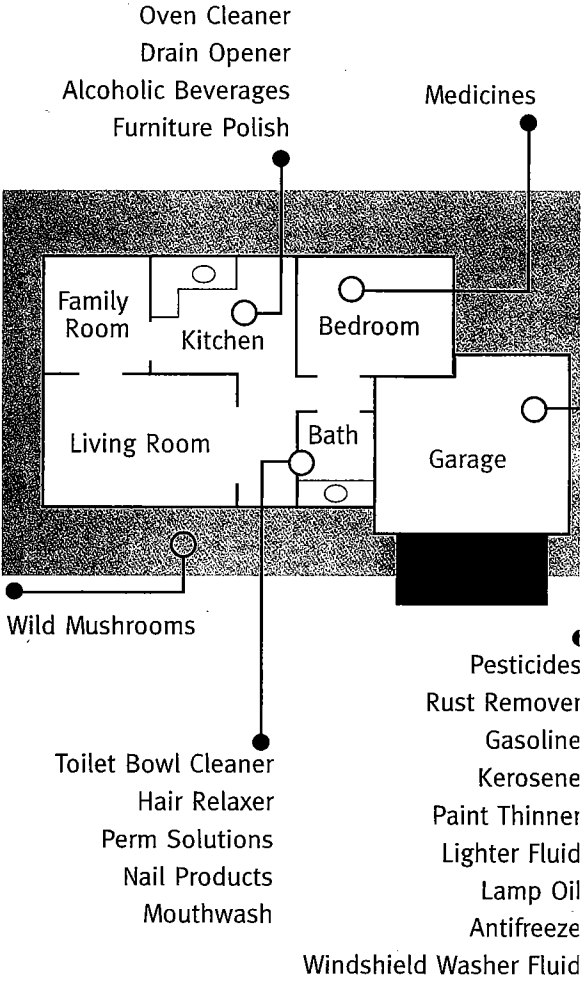
POISON CENTERS HELP SENIORS AND PEOPLE OF ALL AGES WHEN THEY TAKE TOO MUCH OR THE WRONG MEDICINE.



POISON CENTERS GIVE ADVICE ABOUT PREVENTING AND TREATING CHEMICAL EXPOSURES ON THE JOB.

**You Can Prevent Poisonings at Home**

Products and medicines can hurt you if they are used the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person.



**Have a question? All questions about poison are smart questions.  
Ask FIRST to prevent a poisoning!**

## DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR POISON CENTER?

In response to the ever-increasing number of poison hazards, many countries throughout the world have established poison control centers. Currently, there are hundreds of these specialized medical units in the United States.

The Poison Control Center provides accurate, up-to-date information about potential hazards and recommends treatment as needed.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers is a nationwide organization of poison centers and concerned individuals dedicated to education and research to decrease and prevent accidental poisoning. The AAPCC works with our local Poison Control Center, the government and industry to make life safer from the hazards of poisons.

The best treatment for a poisoning is to prevent it from happening. Call the Mississippi Regional Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 for information or assistance.

The University of Mississippi Medical Center offers equal opportunity in education and employment and in all its programs and services, M/F/D/V.

## SOME DO'S AND DON'TS

- Never eat any part of an unknown plant or mushroom. Teach your children never to put leaves, stems, bark, seeds, nuts or berries from any plant into their mouths.
- Keep poisonous houseplants out of the reach of young children. Store bulbs and seeds out of sight and out of reach.
- Learn to identify the poisonous plants in your neighborhood.
- Do not assume that a plant is not poisonous because birds or other wildlife eat it.
- Do not rely on cooking to destroy toxic chemicals in plants. Never use anything prepared from nature as a medicine or "tea."

Remember that any plant may cause unexpected reactions in certain individuals. Always check with the Poison Control Center or your physician when a plant has been ingested.

### IF A POISONING OCCURS, CALL:

**Mississippi Regional Poison Control  
UMC**

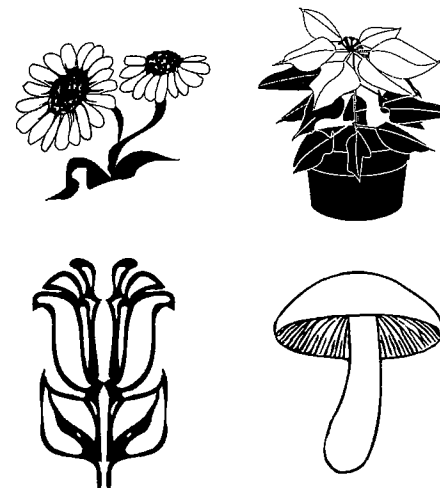
**1-800-222-1222**

Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

Ambulance: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

## What about Plants?



**Mississippi Regional  
Poison Control Center**

**1-800-222-1222**

In cooperation with the:



**American  
Association  
of Poison  
Control Centers**

## DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR PLANTS?

Household plants have become one of the nation's leading causes of toxic ingestions in children.

This information sheet will help you identify which plants are poisonous. The plants listed are the most commonly asked about.

It's important for you to know the names of all of the plants in your home and yard because they cannot be identified accurately from a telephone description.

If you don't know the name of a plant have it identified at the nearest landscape and gardening center.

If you don't find a particular plant on these lists, please call or write our Poison Control Center.

## TOXIC

The following plants are considered **TOXIC** (poisonous, possibly dangerous).

These plants contain a wide variety of poisons. Symptoms of ingestion may vary from a mild stomachache, skin rash, swelling of the mouth and throat to involvement of the heart, kidneys or other organs. The Poison Control Center can give you more specific information on these or other plants that can be poisonous. Many plants do not cause toxicity unless ingested in very large amounts.

|                                |                                   |                      |                               |                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Anemone                        | Daphne                            | Jack-in-the-pulpit   | Monkshood                     | Primrose          |
| Angel Trumpet Tree             | Delphinium                        | Jequirty Bean or Pea | Morning Glory                 | Ranunculus        |
| Apricot Kernels                | Devil's Ivy                       | Jerusalem Cherry     | Mother-in-law Plant           | Rhododendron      |
| Arrowhead                      | Dieffenbachia                     | Jessamine (Jasmine)  | Mushroom                      | Rhubarb Blade     |
| Avocado Leaves                 | (Dumb Cane)                       | Jimson Weed          | Narcissus                     | Rosary Pea        |
| Azaleas                        | Elderberry                        | (Thorn Apple)        | Nightshade                    | Star of Bethlehem |
| Betel Nut Palm                 | Elephant Ear                      | Jonquil              | Oleander                      | Sweet Pea         |
| Bittersweet                    | English Ivy                       | Lantana Camara       | Periwinkle                    | Tobacco           |
| Buckeye                        | Four O'clock                      | (Red Sage)           | Peyote (mescal)               | Tomato Vines      |
| Buttercups                     | Foxglove                          | Larkspur             | Philodendron                  | Tulips            |
| Caladium                       | Holly Berries                     | Laurels              | Poison Hemlock                | Water Hemlock     |
| Calla Lily                     | Horsetail Reed                    | Lily-of-the-valley   | Poison Ivy                    | Wisteria          |
| Castor Bean                    | Hyacinth                          | Lobelia              | Poison Oak                    | Yew               |
| Cherries – Wild and Cultivated | Hydrangea                         | Marijuana            | Poppy (Calif. Poppy Excepted) |                   |
| Crocus, Autumn                 | Iris                              | Mayapple             | Pokeweed                      |                   |
| Daffodil                       | Ivy (Boston, English, and Others) | Mistletoe            | Potato Sprouts                |                   |
|                                |                                   | Moonseed             |                               |                   |

## NONTOXIC

The following plants are considered essentially **NON-TOXIC** (safe, not poisonous). Symptoms from eating or handling these plants are unlikely, but any plant may cause an unexpected reaction in certain individuals.

|                              |                            |                        |                             |                 |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Abelia                       | Bamboo                     | Creeping Jennie,       | Hedge Apples                | Purple Passion  |
| Abyssinian Sword Lily        | Begonia                    | Moneywort, Lysima      | Hens & Chicks               | Pyrocantha      |
| African Daisy                | Bird's Nest Fern           | Croton (House Variety) | Hoya                        | Rose            |
| African Palm                 | Blood Leaf Plant           | Dahlia                 | Jade Plant                  | Sanseveria      |
| African Violet               | Boston Ferns               | Daisies                | Kalanchoe                   | Schefflera      |
| Airplane Plant               | Bougainvillea              | Dandelion              | Lily (Day, Easter or Tiger) | Sensitive Plant |
| Aluminum Plant               | Cactus – certain varieties | Dogwood                | Lipstick Plant              | Spider Plant    |
| Aralia                       | California Holly           | Donkey Tail            | Magnolia                    | Swedish Ivy     |
| Araucaria                    | California Poppy           | Dracaena               | Marigold                    | Umbrella        |
| Asparagus Fern               | Camellia                   | Easter Lily            | Monkey Plant                | Violets         |
| (Dermatitis)                 | Christmas Cactus           | Echeveria              | Mother-in-law Tongue        | Wandering Jew   |
| Aspidistra (Cast Iron Plant) | Coleus Species             | Eucalyptus (Caution)   | Norfolk Island Pine         | Weeping Fig     |
| Aster                        | Corn Plant                 | Eugenia                | Peperomia                   | Weeping Willow  |
| Baby's Tears                 | Crabapples                 | Gardenia               | Petunia                     | Wild Onion      |
| Bachelor Buttons             | Creeping Charlie           | Grape Ivy              | Prayer Plant                | Zebra Plant     |

**Save this number.  
You might save a life.**



Call 1-800-222-1222 for emergency treatment advice, for questions about medicines, and for information about poisons in your home, outdoors, or at work. Health care experts are standing by 24 hours a day. And call to request free magnets and stickers that display the poison hotline number.

*A message from*  
**YOUR POISON CONTROL CENTER**